

CATALOOCHEE RANCH

Northern Section Trails

This map is composed of trails on the Northern Section of Cataloochee Ranch:

Bald Face | Bunchberry
Devil's Britches | Pine Tree Gap
Thunderbolt Knob

These trails can be combined to make various loops.

Hikers Checklist:

- Wear suitable clothing, especially shoes or boots to support your ankles.
- Bring rain gear. Even when skies look clear, weather can change quickly in the Smokies.
- Bring this map or a field guide to the area.
- Carry a mobile phone. There is limited reception.
- Bring enough water and snacks.
- Stay on established trails.
- Remember to close any gates you open.

BUNCHBERRY

.72 miles, one way | 214 ft. ascent

This short trail provides a safe route leading to the Northern Section trails. Leaving Switchback, head North (right) on Ranch Drive about .1 mile. At the entrance to the Ranch, is the intersection of Fie Top, Ski Lodge, Falls, and Sheep Pasture Roads. Just across this is Bunchberry. This route runs parallel to, and is just downhill of Ski Lodge Road. The first part of this trail is in a brushy setting with blackberry brambles, apple trees, and well established rhododendron, but it becomes more forested as you continue. Views westward are the mountains associated with the Balsams and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Keep north all the way to Devil's Britches Trail. From here you can choose to walk back to the ranch, or walk to your right for a short distance to connect with other trails.

BALD FACE

1.4 mile, one way | 289 ft. ascent

Follow the Directions to Bunchberry. Once at Devil's Britches Trail, walk to your right for a short distance, then turn left on Pine Tree Gap Trail. To your right will be a locked gate with a walk-through at Pine Tree Gap Road.

This is a high elevation meadow trail offering many panoramic 180° southern views. To reach this trail, travel upward in elevation to Pine Tree Gap. It's worth a short detour to enjoy Todd's Folley, which provides wonderful views of the ranch and Moody Top. Enjoy a break or a packed lunch on the log benches here. To continue, return to Pine Tree Gap Trail and head uphill.

Once you reach the top, you'll see the fence that borders Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Follow the trail to your right, keeping the fence on your left. After a half mile distance in the meadow, begin to look for a narrow dirt footpath to the right, away from the fence. This is Bald Face Trail - located short of reaching the top of Hemphill Bald.

At this point, the trail remains mostly level until you pass through a small forested grove of pine trees. This is just before the downhill journey into Double Gap through the meadow. Take a left just beyond Hog Hilton, another great picnic spot. You'll reach the end of this trail at a gate passage at Double Gap. There are Great Smoky Mountain National Park trail indicators. Long ago Double Gap was a well-traveled route from Cataloochee Valley toward Maggie Valley and Waynesville.

DEVIL'S BRITCHES

.25 mile, one way | 50 ft. ascent

Follow the Directions to Bunchberry. When Bunchberry ends, take a left onto Devil's Britches.

This is a short and gentle winding trail leading to a quaint picnic area. It is a wooded walk through second growth forest offering views, at times, of mountain coves and mountain panoramas. After a

THUNDERBOLT KNOB

.6 miles, one way

From Hemphill Bald or Bald Face Trail, you can walk an additional .25 mile to Thunderbolt Knob, if you feel up to it, for more expansive views. Keep the fence on your left and remain on Cataloochee Ranch property. A few low, wooden benches can be found at Thunderbolt Knob.

From here you can decide to walk down through the steep pasture or follow Thunderbolt Knob Trail for an easier descent through a small pine tree forest. Once in the pasture, locate Hog Hilton (the fenced area in the middle of the pasture). To the right, along the property line, you'll see an old road. Follow that to Double Gap Road for your walk back. You'll find a Trail Marker Tree marked by a sign just above the road. Just beyond that, you'll find the Wildflower Trail. This will lead you up over the ridge, through rhododendron and mountain laurels to get back to Bunchberry for your return to the ranch.

ADDITIONAL TRAILS

Lost Ridge
Double Gap
Marker Tree Trail
The Swag
Hemphill Bald Trail (GSMNP)

These trail descriptions are covered in detail on the maps provided for The Swag. Please feel welcome to request a Southwestern Ridge Trails map to plan spending a day on the Cataloochee Divide ridge.

THINGS TO NOTE

- There is no parking at any trailheads.
- Throughout the trails, you may come across some gates that are dummy locked - a non-functional lock that is used to give the appearance of one. Typically, you can lift the chain up over the post. Please remember to leave it the way you found it once passing through.

Map Illustration by Ken Czarnomski
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small creek crossing, the route becomes relatively level and that's where you'll find the picnic area. The trail looks like it continues beyond here, but please note it is private property.

PINE TREE GAP

1.7 miles, one way | 706 ft. ascent

Follow the Directions to Bunchberry. Once at Devil's Britches Trail, walk to your right for a short distance, then turn left on Pine Tree Gap Trail. To your right will be a locked gate with a walk-through at Pine Tree Gap Road. This trail follows an old road bed uphill to Hemphill Bald and the historical Cataloochee Divide ridge. It also offers an inviting stop at Todd's Folley and a direct view to Moody Top, as well as the ranch.











This route starts its ascent to Hemphill Bald immediately. You will be passing through the same forested terrain and will be just above Devil's Britches. It is best to stay on the trail. There are several intersecting trails which do not always connect. About halfway up, there is a short diversion to Todd's Folley, a great place for refreshment and views. Todd's Folley was used as an overnight camping spot by the Ranch dating to the 1930's. Many of the associated stories are worthwhile, but the best one is Todd's, who was a former trail guide at the Ranch.

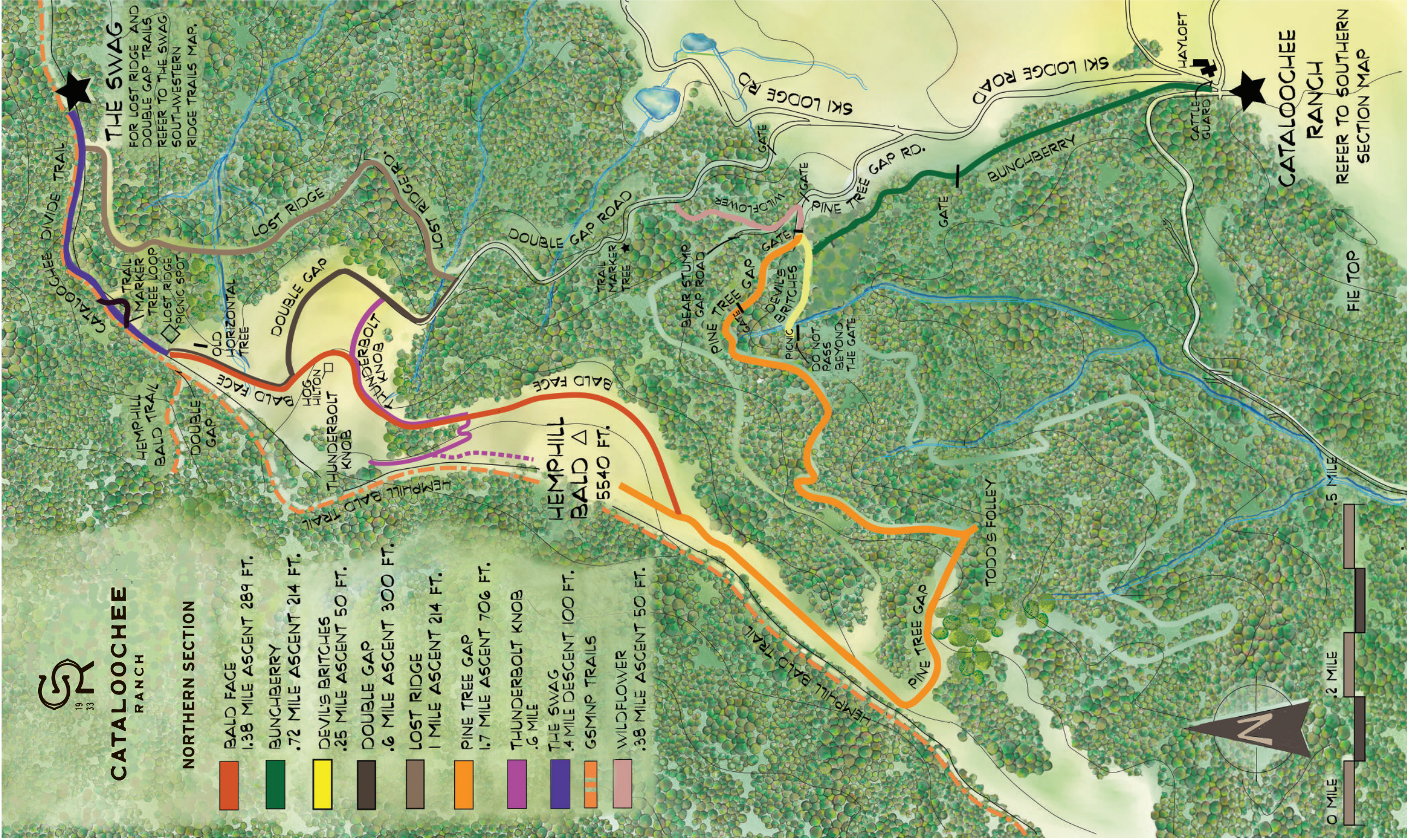
From Todd's Folley, continue uphill left (Northwest) on Pine Tree Gap Trail. Once you reach the top, you'll see the fence that borders Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Follow the trail to your right, keeping the fence on your left. Follow the Great Smoky Mountains National Park border uphill through the meadow to ascend Hemphill Bald. At the top of Hemphill Bald, there is an identifying marker cut into a large flat stone table. Hemphill Bald offers one of the best views in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It defines the park's eastern boundary. Experience 270° panoramic views to many surrounding mountain ranges from this summit. While resting, it is a great location to plan the remainder of your trek back.



CATALOOCHEE RANCH

NORTHERN SECTION

-  **BALD FACE**
1.38 MILE ASCENT 289 FT.
-  **BUNCHBERRY**
.72 MILE ASCENT 214 FT.
-  **DEVIL'S BRITCHES**
.25 MILE ASCENT 50 FT.
-  **DOUBLE GAP**
.6 MILE ASCENT 300 FT.
-  **LOST RIDGE**
1 MILE ASCENT 214 FT.
-  **PINE TREE GAP**
1.7 MILE ASCENT 706 FT.
-  **THUNDERBOLT KNOB**
.6 MILE
-  **THE SWAG**
.4 MILE DESCENT 100 FT.
-  **GSMNP TRAILS**
-  **WILDFLOWER**
.38 MILE ASCENT 50 FT.



THE SWAG
FOR LOST RIDGE AND
DOUBLE GAP TRAILS
REFER TO THE SWAG
SOUTHWESTERN
RIDGE TRAILS MAP.

CATALOOCHEE RANCH
REFER TO SOUTHERN
SECTION MAP

0 MILE .5 MILE 1 MILE 2 MILE 3 MILE